

## ***Quality Counts for Kids* Task Force Meeting**

### **August 2, 2004**

**Task Force Members Attendance:** Task Force Chair: Ann Terrell-Milwaukee Affiliate, NBCDI Board of Directors, Mary Babula – Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Gershia Coggs – Child Care Providers Helper, Shelley Cousin – Wisconsin Head Start Association, Dave Edie – UW-Extension Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership, Lisa Furseth – Wisconsin Community Action Program, Tammy Hammell – Knowledge Learning Corporation, Dana Harmel – Wisconsin Family Child Care Association Representative, Jane Ilgen – Wisconsin Child Care Improvement Project, Laura Klingelhoets – Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association Representative, Sandy Leibfried – Southwest Wisconsin CCR&R, Carol Maurer – 4C Community Coordinated Child Care, M. Judy Mays – Dusk 2 Dawn Child Care, Mary Motquin – Intertribal Child Care Council, Mike Poma – Milwaukee County Department of Human Services, Jane Robinson – The Registry, Barb Schuler – Wisconsin Technical College System Office and Kari Stroede – Satellite Family Child Care.

**Absent:** Joyce Mallory – Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Jose Martinez – United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc., Lisa Turnbull – Sawyer County Department of Human Services.

**Task Force Staff Attendance:** Laura Saterfield – Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Child Care Section Chief, DWD staff: Linda Leonhart, Jane Penner-Hoppe and Alan Sweet; Department of Health and Family Services staff: Anne Carmody, Jill Chase and Julie Strong; and Department of Administration staff: Erin Fath.

**Task Force Early Childhood Community Experts:** Susan Tragesser - Planning Council for Health and Human Services, Inc., Mary Roach and Jason Bierbrauer - UW-Extension Research Partnership, Christine Breunig - Community Coordinated Child Care, Inc.

**Task Force Visitors:** Josh Abrahams, Beverly Anderson, Wendy Bahr, Michelle Bethke, Gabe Blood, Susan Bohn, Rebecca Brueggeman, Glenna Carter, Judy Olson, Leticia Smith-Evans, Pat Steliga, Carrie Volenberg and Pirkko Zweifel.

### **Call to Order**

Ann Terrell, Chair of the *Quality Counts for Kids* Task Force called the meeting to order and welcomed Task Force members, staff and visitors. Mary Babula introduced herself as the permanent replacement for Jeannette Paulson on the Task Force. Jeannette is in the process of adopting a child. Ann reiterated the charge of the group and the ground rules for the group's operation.

Ann called for approval of the minutes for July 19, 2004. Members were given a few minutes to read the minutes. There was discussion about whether or not a vote was held about requiring a high school degree for family child care providers. It was pointed out that this subject was discussed and reflected in the notes but a formal vote was not taken. Jane Robinson approved the minutes, seconded by Mary Babula. The motion carried.

Ann Terrell reviewed the timeline of upcoming meetings. She reiterated that the Task Force would follow the majority vote rule for making decisions.

### **Discussion of Options by the Task Force**

Laura presented a quality rating hybrid option to the Task Force developed as a result of the discussion at the last Task Force meeting (07-19-04). The model combines building blocks and points, regulation and multiple quality indicators. The model is not endorsed by staff or backed by research. It was developed in response to the last meeting's discussion. Laura explained the components of the model including categories for regulation, teacher qualifications, director qualifications, learning environment/curriculum, and center policies and practices. See the "Option 5" handout for a further description of the model. On the reverse side of the handout was the family child care model that had similar categories.

### **Extensive discussion about whether or not to consider this hybrid followed.**

1. Laura was asked to explain why it is not research-based.

Response She replied that time was not available to ensure that it was research based as were the other models developed by the UW-Extension. It was pointed out by some that the individual components of the model were research based.

Question: Was research used to tie points to criteria?

Response Dave Edie answered that it was not; however, there is evidence that educated staff provide quality care. Because of this, staff qualifications were heavily weighted.

2. How complicated will it be to verify these areas and will additional staff be needed?

Response There will be a need for additional staff to verify information requested and ensure it is done fairly and accurately.

3. Question about Tier 1 and Tier 2 including certified providers. It was pointed out that the family model includes certified providers. Would there be a program score if we use an environmental assessment?

Response Laura replied that in some other states, an assessment process is required not a set score. For example, in Oklahoma, they encourage the use of ECERS but don't use the scores to tie to reimbursement. The Assessment process can be a valuable learning tool for programs.

4. Assessment. Ann raised the possible option of advancing two models, one model that is a work in progress and one that is the full vision or the Cadillac version. What can be done now and what is our Cadillac version? It was suggested that the group consider a phasing-in approach, where the first model moves us toward the Cadillac model. Phase 1 and phase 2 would be good for providers to ease into the process.

Question: Laura was asked if there was a staff-endorsed model.

Response Laura replied that there was not a staff-endorsed model.

Ann pointed out that we need to consider the budget in determining what option would be feasible.

5. How were the factors listed in the Program/Policies decided on? Why were they seen as important?

Response Dave Edie indicated that most of them were in earlier versions of models and most were used in more than one state. Also factored in were elements that would be reasonable and objective to document. He pointed out that a higher score for the food program was used because this program brings additional “eyes” into the program, such as additional consultation for a program.

Under a points system, from the provider’s standpoint, what is the cost to verify this criteria versus what it costs to do something like a business plan which would be more useful for them?

6. Comments were made that under a voluntary quality indicator system, we are most likely to see a good program get better. It will be harder to move the lowest quality program to higher quality. How do we reach both groups of programs and provide incentives to participate? Complaint investigations and reasons for closure were reviewed by a Task Force member. To what degree have these conditions been considered in quality indicators? How are we going to take data such as this and reward people for improving their programs? Administrative records, staffing, difficulties with licensing are all issues for programs. How can the Task Force use some of the quality indicators to ensure that these are addressed? Jill Chase will make these reports on the types of complaints available to the Task Force.

Ann redirected the group to discuss what **type of model** would make sense for this program: hybrid, steps or a point system? Programs that want to improve will need to see that there is support for them to do so.

Discussion followed.

- We need to propose something that the field will support or it will not work. The infrastructure that has been built to support quality must be utilized. Supports for parents and providers must continue. The current system needs to be used for this effort. A suggested phasing-in may be that phase one is to create a plan, and phase two is to fund the plan.
  - No Child Left Behind Act is an example of a problematic legislation for schools. There is a mandate to improve without the resources to improve, and then the school loses funds when improvements are made.
7. Regional areas were suggested as a possible way to organize a plan that could be met through the hybrid model. Choices must be there for programs. This hybrid could work for a variety of perspectives. It provides a lot of choices and also challenges providers. It offers a menu for providers from which to choose. The other models are too “set”, this would allow for flexibility across the state in using different tools.

- A concern was expressed that with some models a provider could achieve a high level without meeting basic licensing requirements, while the hybrid provides two key steps in licensing and regulation and compliance before moving up.
- A concern was stated about a provider under a pure “points” model moving up too quickly. Would this occurrence be an overstatement of their capacity?
- What exactly do we mean by tiers and terms of the categories?
- Tier 1 should be regulatory compliance.
- Concern about improving poor quality systems. Will the model systems improve poor quality programs? Reimbursement is the prime linkage to quality and will affect all programs.
- There will be programs that can score points quickly. We need to have ways to include programs who are barely meeting licensing requirements but who want to improve into their system. How do we support them so they are not left out?
- Importance of documentation was discussed extensively.
- There are verification concerns such as who will document the learning environments and determine they are “well-equipped”. There is not a system in place to evaluate these criteria.
- For Tier 1 and Tier 2, it is important to ask DHFS how many centers open and close in the same year. Should one year of operation be a benchmark?
- Task Force members were directed not to focus on the weights of the points during this discussion.
- Once a model is decided, the Task Force members will have to be very supportive of any platform that gets developed.
- If we went with this model, would we allow flexibility? Some members were concerned about supporting anything that had different standards for different regions. Each model should be broad enough to reflect statewide criteria. We need to define how these are met. How do we ensure that these criteria are met? How will we accurately measure some of the criteria?

Ann called for a vote on the form that the model should take, steps or points or the hybrid model. Participants were directed to only consider the models. She asked the group if they were interested in discussing the other models presented in July. No one on the Task Force expressed an interest in doing that. Ann reminded the group that majority vote is the rule for voting. Task Force members voted on which model they preferred.

### **Vote on Program Model**

**Motion 1: All task force members voted in favor of the hybrid option.**

**What are the principles that we can agree on before we look at the components of this model?**

The group brainstormed several components (however there was not follow-up discussion and a decision that these are, in fact, principles with which a majority of the task force agrees; also some are not principles but questions to be answered):

1. It should be a voluntary system, not a mandatory requirement.

2. Level of documentation must be required, how are things validated (self-reported, observation, validated). How will observations happen? Who is going to do the ratings?
3. Public investment and parent involvement. Programs cannot provide the high quality programs we are looking for without public investment (resources, Licensing, CCR&R, TEACH). It is unrealistic to assume otherwise. Parent involvement is essential, and need to demonstrate an improvement in the quality of parent involvement. How are we going to let parents and providers know about this, marketing? Internal marketing will need to come first, marketing of the groups that the Task Force represents.
4. System needs to support and be reflective of diverse programs, language, racial and ethnic diversity, values, beliefs and cultural practices throughout Wisconsin. Must be flexible and adapt to geographic differences. Model must be culturally relevant. Needs to comply with ADA/Should there be a specialized component for children with special need.
5. Focus on how to move programs into regulatory compliance. How long do programs have to move into compliance? How does that affect rating? Ability to progress; stay in compliance.
6. There needs to be a large enough variation in reimbursement for it to be an incentive; must be challenging enough.
7. What about an implementation date? This needs to be a discussion item. How will implementation dates reflect phases and what will they be?
8. Target the consumer. Raise the awareness of the consumer about quality; business is also an audience for this. Must be written in a way that is understood by a wide population.
9. Simple, valid, realistic and efficient criteria brought by Dave Riley must be considered. Balance of points for staff qualifications and for programs/policies, 10 for staff and 5 for program, is this a fair balance? Ratings need to be as objective as possible to avoid complaints.
10. Should allow blending with other systems, such as programs for four-year olds. At the same time, we need to keep the hybrid option open to tie into public education in the future.

### **Comments on the Principles:**

- A concern was expressed about the principle that this be a voluntary system. What incentive will some providers really need to participate? A concern was voiced that they will not participate if it is not mandatory, particularly in rural areas.

- A question was raised about moving forward with Phase 1 was raised. What do we have; what can we do now? Who will measure it? What do we need to create a system that we want to have?

Ann called for further discussion about the Hybrid Model. Are we in agreement about this? Are the tiers accurate?

- We would like to see program quality in all tiers, not just parent involvement. How do we show that providers can continue to improve in the tier they are in? There was not agreement about this; they need to progress in tiers and advance to the next tier. Assessment of parent involvement needs to be objective but rigorous. How can it be done without overburdening the currently funded child care budget?
- A model was offered that would include four tiers, licensed or certified as basic. The program would be voluntary. Provider would start at the basic level. Regulation should be the first level and the basic block. Compliance is the floor. Providers do not move up until they have met this.
- Committee members believed it was critical to define steps very clearly so they are not ambiguous. What does each of these steps mean? If there is ambiguity, the process can be challenged. For example, family child care curriculum based on model early learning standards. Can those with a high school degree use that curriculum successfully or is more advanced education needed? The property rights of providers need to be considered.
- At what point can a provider re-apply for a new designation? A building block system means that providers meet basic criteria first. Providers could both progress and slide back because of lost staff.
- How often is a program assessed, is it annually?
- Should a guiding principle be that providers need to earn points in more than one category? Otherwise, a lot of points could be earned in one area but not in another. How do we make sure that providers do not choose just one area where they know they can score points more easily than in other areas?
- Question about The Registry and what we are proposing. It was asked how many providers know about the proposed Registry System?
- It is important that the quality indicators system be flexible and built on incentives. It has to be challenging but achievable, the points system allows for this.

**Ann asked the Task Force to consider if they agree on the categories that were presented.** Discussion followed.

- Qualifications of staff are linked by research to quality of child care provided. Qualifications of teachers are linked to ECERS scores. Ample research indicates that

Teacher qualifications in centers should be included. How much weight it receives is another question.

- A business person bears the responsibility to run their business. It is important that we consider high school education as criteria for this profession. It will be difficult to encourage people to go to college if they do not have a high school degree or equivalent. Under teacher qualifications, high school diploma should be listed. High school diploma is a must; providers should not be allowed to over-compensate for this with other points. Currently qualifications for lead teachers include a GED, for Family Child Care this is not a requirement. A GED should be a requirement/component on Tier 1. It was pointed out that the Task Force could recommend this but it would require a change in licensing rules. If it were included in Tier 2, it would not require a licensing change but would create an incentive for programs to hire teachers with a GED. Tier 2 could include licensed, certified, in regulatory compliance, and high school diploma or equivalent.
- Should we have something that emphasizes continuing professional development? There is not information on what is happening with continuing education. Continuing education is a part of licensing rules. Licensing requirements should be the baseline. It was pointed out that certified providers have fewer hours than licensed programs for in-service. Is there a way to build a credible reward for programs that invest in continuing education beyond what is required by licensing?

Dave Edie responded that in the development of models, UW recognized that credit-based learning is more effective than non-credit based learning, that is why the points were assigned to credits. It would be difficult to track non-credit-based opportunities.

- It is important to be knowledgeable of existing PI 34 Teacher's licensing which is being administered by DPI. Should a professional development plan component be verified as part of that system?
- A question was raised about using The Registry levels rather than the educational information in the Tiers.

**Motion 2 (1<sup>st</sup>): David Edie proposed that we accept Tier 1 and Tier 2 with family child care; Tier 2 would add the requirement of a high school diploma for all teachers or its equivalent with definitions to be worked out.** Judy Mays seconded the motion.

#### **Discussion on Motion 2:**

Part of marketing should include the fact that licensed teachers must have a high school degree or its equivalency. Licensing needs to be the floor. What do we mean by regulatory compliance? What is substantial compliance?

Jill Chase will bring information and definitions about compliance levels to the next meeting.

- Shelley Cousin offered an amendment that “one year of operation be a requirement for a program that would be built into Tier 1.” This was adopted as part of the motion.

**Motion 2a (as amended):** David Edie proposed that we accept Tier 1 and Tier 2 with family child care; Tier 2 would add the requirement of a high school diploma for all teachers or its equivalent with definitions to be worked out. One year of operation would be required to be considered to meet Tier 1.

**Discussion on Motion 2a:**

- At what tier do we introduce a different reimbursement?
- When does the higher subsidy begin, after you have met a certain level?
- It takes time to get everything in place to meet licensing requirements. This is especially true for family child care providers with little income.
- We will need to remember areas where there are few providers, especially for second shift care or in rural areas. There is not the built-in timeline for certified child care; they serve children right away.
- Dave Edie responded to the concern that programs are in compliance yet are still on Tier 1.  
Response: Oklahoma found that over time as quality improved, programs would be required to be in compliance.

Discussion ended and a vote was taken on Motion 2a re: accepting Tier 1 and Tier 2, etc.

**Voting Results on Motion 2a(accept Tier 1 & Tier 2 etc.):** Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion 3: Categories for Tiers above 1 and 2:** Dave Edie moved that we accept the categories in the hybrid option with details to be worked out in each category. Lisa Furseth seconded the motion. A vote was taken.

**Voting Results on Motion 3:** The motion passed with one abstention.

**Continuing discussion on categories included the following questions and comments.**

- Under learning environment – some members indicated that they would like to see the Tennessee Report Card developed under policies and practices for parents.



- Experience and retention is not reflected under qualifications. How can it be added? The scholarship and bonus program needs to be described. Could it be another category?
- Do we want to include ratios in our quality system as other states have, even though Wisconsin has good standards? This would be a new area.
- Learning Environment/Curriculum – does the title tell us what is expected? Could category 3 incorporate group size and ratios if we change titles? Both accreditation and licensing use these criteria. Why didn't UW include this?

Response Dave Edie replied that this is highly fluctuating event in each program. The ability to measure group size and ratios on a regular basis or even an average would be challenging. Documentation and monitoring of this would be very difficult.

- Ratios could be offered as a middle step between licensing and accreditation, which other programs could reach (as Tennessee does).
- We should use the same language in both family and group tiers.
- The importance of being clear on each category and definition was raised.

**Motion 4: Mary Babula moved that we accept a five-tier system with the tiers being graduated. Tiers 3, 4 and 5 would require Tier 2 plus additional points to be earned in the approved categories.**

Carol Maurer seconded the motion.

#### **Discussion on Motion 4.**

- If we have not decided what the definition of licensing compliance for Tier 2 is yet, it is difficult to make decisions for the tiers beyond it. We should wait until we have decided the original components of each tier. Wisconsin is at the top with its licensing rules. If a program is reasonably in compliance with Licensing or Certification, these are high standards nationally. Despite high standards nationally, we are still facing issues here.
- A five-tier system allows for programs to move up. Steps are not too unmanageable for upward movement.
- A concern was raised again that providers should have points in every category to move forward; it is not possible to move forward in quality if you do not have improvement in all areas. It is more complex for people to understand; there was concern about providers and consumers understanding the system. We could require that points be available in more than one area.

- Definitions and nuances need to be worked out but it is a motion about the model. Public investment is needed in order to support a system where programs have the ability to move up.

**Voting Results on Motion 4 (five-tier system):** The motion passed with one opposed.

### **Discussion of Categories**

**Motion 5:** Dave Edie moved that we accept teacher qualifications for category 1.

Lisa Furseth seconded.

### **Discussion on Motion 5.**

- It was suggested that we attach The Registry levels to the points.
- What does the research support? Does it support the weighting of the staff? Dave Edie replied that research is not that precise. Perhaps there should be a higher correlation. Deborah Vandell's research underscores this.
- The Registry levels should be aligned with the tiers. This group should look at The Registry levels and make recommendations.
- Should there be a difference between Associate and Bachelor Degree? Why are they the same? Should Associate Degree receive fewer points than Bachelor? Research indicates that a Bachelor's degree in any field leads to a more appropriate program for children, which is why it is considered to be equivalent to an Associate Degree in a related field.
- Director qualifications need to have extra weight because of their key role in a program.
- A Bachelor's Degree that is not related should not be weighted more than an Associate's Degree. Licensing rules would require child development training for a person with a bachelor's degree – non-related. Research shows that a bachelor's degree in a non-related field is associated with improved quality.
- How are we defining lead teachers? For clarification Ann asked that we refer to lead teachers as teachers.
- How many children is a center licensed to serve, should we be looking at enrolled or licensed capacity? Jill Chase talked about the difference between the two. Many center's licensed capacity is higher than their enrollment. The only efficient way to do it is to look at licensed capacity not children enrolled because of the fluctuation in that number.

Mary Babula moved to amend Motion 5 by adding that a person with a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education would receive an additional point. There was no second so the discussion continued.

- Why aren't we including Masters or Ph.D., why are these degrees absent? They should be reflected as bars of excellence.
- The Registry is re-examining levels this year in response to tiered reimbursement among other reasons. The Registry has a goal of simple, more clearly defined Registry levels. These are being explored by focus groups and have been part of discussions with the UW.

Mary Babula offered an amendment to Motion 5. Jane Robinson seconded it.

For teacher qualifications, add:

4 points: the center has a 1:20 ratio of teachers with an Associate Degree (related) or a Bachelor's Degree (unrelated) or a 1:30 ratio of teachers with a Bachelor's Degree (related).

5 points: the center has a 1:10 ratio of teachers with an Associate Degree (related) or a Bachelor's Degree (unrelated) or a 1:20 ratio of teachers with a Bachelor's degree (related).

6 points: the center has a 1:10 ratio of teachers with a Bachelor's Degree (related)

7 points: the center has at least one teacher with a Masters Degree (related) and a 1:10 ratio of teachers with an Associate Degree (related) or Bachelors Degree (related or unrelated).

8 points: the center has at least one teacher with a PHD (related) a 1:10 ratio of teachers with an Associate Degree (related) or Bachelors Degree (related or unrelated).

### **Discussion on the amendment (Teacher Qualification Point System) to Motion 5.**

Dave Edie was asked why the model did not use The Registry levels? He expressed a concern that the public may not know what a Registry level is. He would rather start with hybrid option education levels and tie those to The Registry. Important to keep this information simple.

- The Registry's timeline – they want to keep it consistent with the process for developing this project. Can we hold attachment of Registry levels to the points until the next meeting? Jane Robinson will bring information about the new levels to the next meeting.
- If we are going to add Masters and Ph.D., should we add points for DPI-Licensed Teachers?
- It was also suggested that we could give Bachelor's and Associate Degrees different weights in the models.

A move to table the amendment to Motion 5 and Motion 5 was made by David Edie. Both were tabled until the next Task Force Meeting.

**Continuing discussion about what was included in the tiers followed.**

- Retention and experience of staff needs to be addressed. Other states have used categories like benefits that included salary scales as a separate category. Policies and practices may be the right place to do this.
- There should be more weight for directors because of their important role in steering the direction of a program.
- We need to add a masters and doctoral for qualifications.
- We should add staff benefits category (policies and procedures has 3), and find new criteria that include staff benefits. Health insurance is offered with a significant contribution from the employer. Points for retaining staff could be part of this category.)
- Business and policies category should include center policies and practices and staff benefits.
- Learning environment would include the remaining categories.
- Categories would include qualifications, learning environment, business policies and practices, and staff retention.
- Business and policies would be better for family child care than having an additional category on staff benefits.

**Motion 6 - Mary Babula moved that under group centers that we add a category of staff benefits and change center policies and practices to business policies and practices.**

Shelley Cousin seconded Mary's motion.

Discussion followed on the motion.

- It was pointed out that it is important that family child care also focus on what it means to have benefits.
- Insurance and benefits can fit under a business plan. Categories would be more consistent if we use business practices as opposed to two separate categories.
- Concern about adding health insurance benefits for many providers to meet. Chain programs may be more successful in doing this. David Linsmeier has done a study about how centers are doing in this area that could be shared.
- It could be a bonus for the few that do offer this benefit with out punishing those who cannot offer this benefit.
- Can we expand on what business practices are? How does this relate to centers closing and other licensed program issues?

- Do we need to have consistency of models/language between group and family homes? Family and group providers need to have the option of having the same number of stars.
- We should look at incorporating the report card as a piece for parents.

**Vote on Motion 6: The motion failed on a vote of 8 no, 7 yes and 1 abstention.**

### **Wrap Up and Next Meeting Plans**

Ann asked the group to focus on preparing for the August 18th Task Force meeting?

- It was decided that the August 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will be lengthened to allow for more discussion. The August 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will be from 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. If that accomplishes what we need, we will not need to schedule another meeting. If necessary, we will need to add another meeting. Staff was asked to come up with recommendations and add time to the next meeting.

**Motion 7 - Mary Babula moved that we have a five tier system for family child care with the categories that are listed (similar to group child care). Mary Motquin seconded the motion.**

All approved the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.